(c) the status of Government's efforts in providing legal support to uplift the social, economic and political position of women in the country?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government is aware that social and economic empowerment of women, who constitute half of the population, is essential for sustainable and balanced development of the nation.

(c) To give effect to the Constitutional guarantee of gender equality, the Government has enacted various women-specific laws, like Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition), Act, 1986, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 and the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987, and other laws having provisions concerning women, like laws to ensure their rights at the work place, such as Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, Factories Act, 1948, laws to ensure their right over property, such as Hindu succession Act, 1956.

Bench of Orissa High Court

†1407. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government have submitted any proposal for setting up a bench of the Orissa High Court in the Western part of Orissa;

(b) whether the Government are aware of the demand made and agitation launched by advocates for the same; and

(c) whether the Central Government would take any step to set up the said bench in the State in view of this fact that such benches are existing in other States of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI K. VENKATAPATHY): (a) to (c) The proposal for setting up of a Bench of a High Court is considered on receipt of a complete proposal from the State Government in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court. However, no such proposal has been received from the Government of Orissa.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.